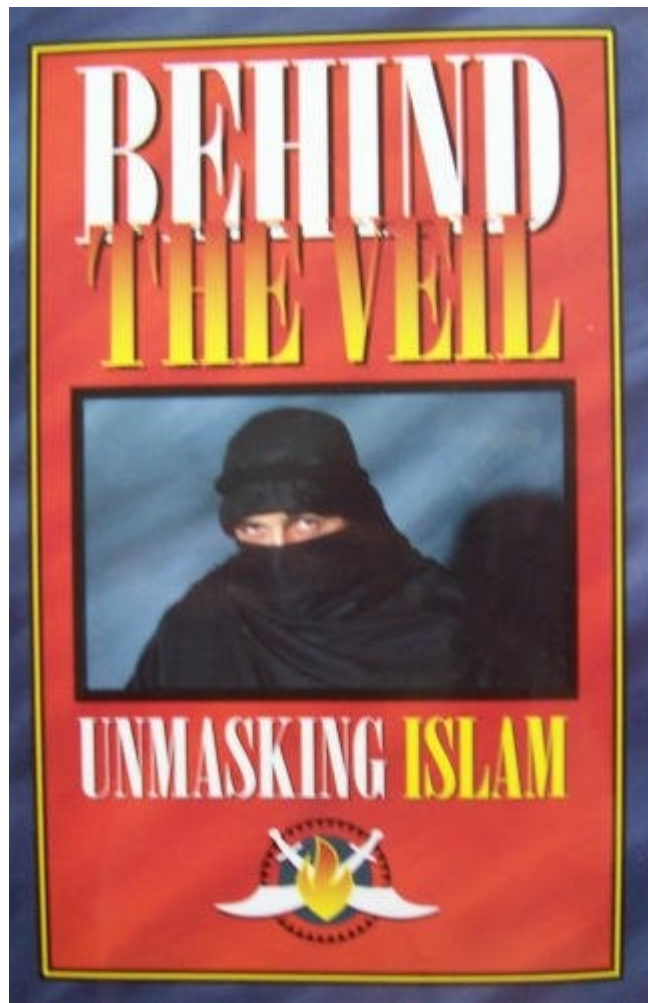


BEHIND THE VEIL

by Abd El Schafi

Part 3



Section Two

The Veil of Equality and Justice

Muslim propagandists take advantage of the fact that Westerners do not read Arabic and therefore (out of ignorance) do not know the reality of Islamic faith as recorded in the books of Muslim scholars. Therefore, Muslim missionaries roam across Europe and America, East and West, writing a throng of books, declaring with a loud voice: "How great Islam is! It is the religion of

social justice, equality, women's rights and dignity." Many naive and superficial people believe these claims and are deceived by this message, but this deceit should end. This veil should be removed.

We have found in Muhammad's sayings (as well as of those of all Muslim scholars – intentionally or unintentionally – that both Islam and Muhammad discriminate between human beings. It matters whether they are males or females, Muslims or non-Muslims. We even find discrimination between Muslims because slavery (as we will see) is an Islamic principle.

Slavery in Islam has regulations and laws which differ from those for freemen, the masters. Actually, Muhammad, his wives, his successors, companions and his relatives owned slaves—males and maids. We can list the names of Muhammad's slaves: men and women, whites and blacks, and we will show that Muhammad himself was a slave merchant especially after he claimed to be a prophet.

After reading these pages it should become very evident to all (including the most fanatical and tenacious Muslim) that Islam is a religion of social injustice, inequality, and racial discrimination.

Before we start our discussion, it is relevant to quote one verse from the Holy Gospel,

"There is neither Jew nor Greek: there is neither bond nor free: there is neither male nor female. For you are all one in Christ Jesus." (Galatians 3:28).

Chapter Three

The Status of Women in Islam

Some mistakenly believe that Islam honors women and dignifies them for the simple reason that they have not read the Qur'anic verses, and the sayings of Muhammad and all Muslim scholars concerning women. Thus they take at face value all the claims of Muslim missionaries in this respect. We seek to excuse those who have "converted" to Islam and are deceived because no one would expect a religion which claims to be divine (at the same time) to treat women so disgracefully.

We found on the other hand, some thinkers (even among Muslim Arabs) who have realized that women are not treated equal to men in Islam, though only a few of them occasionally dare to claim that publicly. Still, since their knowledge of Muhammad's sayings and the commentaries of the scholars is limited, they present a few examples related only to the subjects of polygamy (marrying four women) and easy divorce. Therefore, we seek to discuss here several issues to clarify the point under discussion and to remove the deceitful veil of Islam concerning women.

The Qur'an Commands Men To Beat Women

While the New Testament commands men to love their wives and even to sacrifice their own lives for their sake as Jesus gave His life for us (Ephesians 5:25),

"Husbands, love your wives, as Christ also loved the church, and delivered Himself up for it:",

we see that the Qur'an plainly and disgracefully commands men to beat their women as soon as they show any sign of disobedience to man's authority and orders. It states in Chapter 4:34:

"As for these from women, fear rebellion, admonish them and banish them to beds apart and scourge them."

Without any exception, all the Qur'anic expositors agree upon the meaning of this verse because it is so obvious. In their famous commentary, page 69, the Jalalan said:

"Those of you who are afraid of their disobedience which symptoms become evident to you, threaten them with the fear of God and banish them to beds apart and scourge them."

The Zamakhshari reiterates the same opinion (al-Kash-Shaf Vol. 1, p. 524). Both Imam Baydawi (p. 111), and Al-Tobari (p.92) repeat the same explanation. If we also search Ahkamal-Qur'an (the Ordinances of the Qur'an) by the Imam Shafi'i (Vol. 1, p.211), we read:

"In case of a husband's ill-treatment [of his spouse], the Qur'an permits

reconciliation of the spouses and arbitration, but in the case of the wife it allows scourging her."

At the inception of Islam, we come across a very famous incident which all the Muslim chroniclers record (refer to Imam al-Nawawi: *Riyad al-Salihin*, "The Orchards of Righteous Men", p. 107-108),

"Umar Ibn al-Khattab came to Muhammad saying, 'Women have dared to disobey husbands.' He allowed their husbands to scourge them. Many women approached Muhammad complaining against their husbands because Muhammad received a verse for the Qur'an which commands their husbands to scourge them."

In the *Kash-shaf* (the revealer) of al-Zamakhshari (Vol. 1, p. 525), we read the following,

"On the authority of Muhammad (peace and blessing of Allah be upon him), he said: 'Hang up your scourge in a place where your wife (or wives) can see it.'

Also, on the authority of Asmaa the daughter of Abu Bakr El Sedik:

"I was the fourth wife (among four) of al-Zabayr Ibn al-Awwam. Whenever he became angry at one of us he struck us with a hook rod until it was broken."

This hemistich was composed by al-Zabayr:

"If it were not for her children, I would have hit her."

The command to scourge women is repeated in *Sahih al-Bukhari*, "The Sound Tradition of al-Bukhari" (Vol. 7, p. 100). Ponder for a moment over Muhammad's order to the husband: "Hang up your scourge where your wife can see it." This is intimidation and threat, as if a husband were telling his wife: "Beware of disobedience, for this is the scourge which is ready to fall upon you!"

There is no security or love in Muhammad's words or in the deeds of al-Zobayer Ibn al-Awwam, who was a relative of Muhammad, one of his companions, and one of those models whom every Muslim imitates and vies with all over the world. He was one of the ten whom Muhammad assured of paradise and one of the six whom Umar recommended for the Caliphate. This man used to scourge his wife until the wooden hook was broken, as Asmaa (the daughter of Abu Bakr El Sedik who was one of his four wives) tells us. Is there greater wife abuse than that?

Contemporary Scholars

All contemporary scholars attest to this fact which is obvious in the Qur'an. In the book, "You Ask and Islam Answers" (p. 94 for example), Abdul-latif Mushtahiri says,

"If admonishing and sexual desertion fail to bring forth results and the woman is of a cold and stubborn type, the Qur'an bestows on man the right to straighten her out by way of punishment and beating provided he does not break her bones nor shed blood. Many a wife belongs to this querulous type and requires this sort of punishment to bring her to her senses!"

In his book, "The Individual Guarantee In the Islamic Law" (p. 63), Ahmad Ahmad, a professor at the college of Law at the University of Qatar, denotes the following under the title of "Family Problems' Solution",

"If a woman is afraid that her husband may turn away from her or detest her, she will hasten to bring understanding and reconciliation. But if the husband is afraid that his wife may rebel against him, he hastens to bring mutual understanding by means of exhortation, then by abandonment of the bed, then by the scourging which deters."

Did you read it?—"By the scourging which deters" This is if the symptoms of disobedience became apparent exactly as the Jalalan, Baydawi, Zamakhshari have said and as the Saudi scholars indicated in Al-Muslimun magazine in its issue of March 17, 1989 (page 12). I can also easily list dozens of references, both ancient and contemporary, which explain this verse (4:34). Actually, it does not need any exposition because it is self-explanatory—"and scourge them." It is evident that Christian countries regard wife abuse as a crime punishable by law because nature itself (as well as the simplest human principle) teaches us that it is not permissible for a man to beat an animal—much less his wife!

Yet according to the Islamic faith and by distinct orders issued by the Qur'an and Muhammad, a man is allowed to scourge his wife with a peaceful conscience because he is carrying out God's command as recorded in the Qur'an. "God the compassionate, the Merciful" and the Glorious Qur'an—and Muhammad, the prophet of mercy and humanity who claimed that he honored women, yet said: "Hang up your scourge where your wife can see it."

The Story of Job and his Wife in the Qur'an

In Chapter 38:44, the Qur'an declares that God has commanded righteous Job to beat his wife. We read:

"And (it was said unto him), 'Take in thine hand a branch and smite therewith and break not thine oath.'"

All Muslim scholars agree on the exposition of this verse. Both Jalalan (page 383), and Baydawi (page 604) say:

"When Job's wife was slow (to do something for him) one day, he swore to scourge her one hundred times. God told him, 'Do not break oath, but take a bundle of grass in your hand or rods to beat her up with.'"

The Jalalaan say that Job took one hundred sticks and scourged her once. The Baydawi says that Job's wife's name is Liyya, daughter of Jacob or Rahmeh, daughter of Aphraim, son of Joseph.

Who among us would believe this ridiculous story of the Qur'an about Job, the righteous man, who was famous for his patience? Who among us would believe that God encouraged him to beat his wife with a bundle of grass or sticks so that he would not break his oath?

Forcing the Virgin to Marry

Most people believe that this was merely a detestable habit practiced by some Arabs and Muslims who lived in some underdeveloped countries. However, we must realize that this practice has its roots deep in Islamic law and that it is a principle applied by Muslim scholars. Yet, I myself have read this ordinance in the main sources of Islam acceptable to all Muslim commentators. Let us study together the ordinances and the statements of scholars of exposition and the Islamic law.

Ibn Timiyya and Ibn Hazm, Famous Legists

Muslims regard Ibn Timiyya as the Sheikh of Islam. He truly is. He is the author of great many huge volumes on various subjects. If we open Vol. 32, pp. 29 and 30, we read,

"Even if the virgin is an adult, her father may force her to get married. This is in accordance with Malek Ibn Ons, al-Shafi and Ibn Hanbal's."

On page 39, he also states:

"The young virgin can be forced by her father to get married without being consulted."

This is the verdict of Ibn Timiyya who was joined by some great Legists such as the Shafii, Malek, Ibn Hanbal, and the professors of Islamic law at the inception of Islam in Mecca and Medina. Most Arabs and most Islamic countries embrace their teaching. Actually, if we study Malek Ibn Ons book (Vol. 2, p. 155), we read,

"A father can force his virgin daughter, his maid-slave and his male-slave to get married."

What is Ibn Hazm's opinion concerning the daughter's marriage? How can we ignore the opinion of the chief Legists of Islam in this respect? It is well known that Ibn Hazm also composed huge volumes of books on various topics on which all contemporary Muslim scholars rely because he is one of the greatest scholars of the Islamic law through the ages. In his sixth volume, part 9 of his book al-Muhalla ("The Sweetened", pp. 458-460), he says,

"A father may give his consent to have his young virgin daughter married without obtaining her permission, for she does not have a choice, exactly as Abu Bakr El Sedick did to his daughter, Aisha, when she was six years old. He married her to the prophet Muhammad without her permission."

Then Ibn Hazm adds:

"Even if she was deflowered (previously married and divorced, or a widow) as long as she is young and has not reached the legal age, her father may force her to marry without obtaining her permission."

As long as she is a virgin or just still young, she can be forced to get married without her consent. These are unequivocal, plain words. "Without her consent", and "does not have any choice." These are cruel, hard words and iniquitous Islamic principles which the free human conscience utterly rejects and detests.

If enrolling in a certain school or seeking employment for a particular job, even buying a house or a car, should be in accordance with person's choice, how much more should choice control the issue of a girl's marriage? We acknowledge that a girl should consult with her parents in this matter, and their duty is to offer their sound opinions to protect her interest and future, but we cannot understand or even imagine that a father may force her to get married to a man she does not know and has never met. This is Islam!

These are not just mere words. This is actually what happened to the prophet of Islam because Abu Bakr, El Sedick who was Muhammad's friend, wed him to his daughter, Aisha, when she was six years old, though the actual marriage took place when she was nine years old, according to all the Muslim scholars and Chroniclers, without exception. Even Aisha related the story of her marriage, which we will review shortly.

The difference in their ages was 45 years! Muhammad at that time was 54 years old, the age of her grandfather, but what is significant for us now is not the great difference in age, but rather Aisha's marriage without her permission. Even she was taken by surprise when she found out about it.

What about a son? In part nine, page 462, Ibn Hazm stresses that it is not permissible for the father to force his son to get married.

The reader may be interested to read the text recorded in Sahih Muslim (Vol. 3, p. 577) with the commentary of al-Nawawi, because this book is a basic, indispensable book. Aisha said,

"The messenger of God betrothed me when I was six years old and then married me when I was nine years old."

In another story, he married her when she was seven years old. This is a clear text which makes it permissible for a father to make his daughter marry without obtaining her permission. All Muslims consent to that, and she did not have the option of nullifying this marriage which her father planned. This is according to Malek, al-Shafi'i and the rest of Hedjaz legists.

This was from Sahih Muslim, and a similar text is reiterated several times in

Sahih al-Bukhari, part 7.

The Temporary Contractual Marriage

What a disgraceful and degrading thing a temporary, contractual marriage is for a woman! This is something which Muhammad made lawful according to all the scholars and chroniclers without exception. What an insult to a woman whom Muhammad stripped of her humanity and dignity in order to become a mere instrument for man's enjoyment! Can contemporary Muslim scholars who would die defending Islam answer this specific question and tell us why Muhammad allowed men to have [...] [intimate] relationships with women merely for the sake of enjoyment? According to Muhammad's statement, it could be for some money, or a dress, as Muhammad said to his followers, then he could desert her, leaving her without any rights. What is the difference between this and adultery and debauchery? Could Muhammad and the scholars solve this problem by calling it a temporary marriage or marriage of enjoyment?

Muhammad made it lawful for his followers at first, then prohibited it! Then he made it legal again! Therefore, as soon as he died, the most famous Muslim scholars and relatives of Muhammad (such as Abdulla Ibn -Abbas and Ibn Mas'ud) made it lawful. It was also in practice during the era of Abu Bakr and Umar, as is recorded in Sahih Muslim.

At present, the Shi'ite sects are accustomed to it and practice it in different parts of the world because the Shi'ite leaders claim it. There are more than one hundred million Shi'ites worldwide. Ibn Abbas, who defends the legality of the temporary marriage of enjoyment and its continued practice, is well known among all the Muslim scholars. He occupied a very esteemed position with Muhammad and the caliphs who used to seek his legal opinion and call him the interpreter of the Qur'an.

Sahih al-Bukhari

In part 7, page 37, we read the following,

"While we were in the army, Allah's Apostle came to us and said, 'You have been allowed to have pleasure (Muta), so do it.' If a man and a woman agree to marry temporarily, their marriage should last for three nights, and if they want to continue, they may do so."

There is also a very famous story related to us by Ibn Mas'ud and recorded in

all the Islamic sources. We will allude to some aspect of it as it is mentioned in al-Bukhari, part 7, pp. 8,9, (also in section 6 of the interpretation of Sura, Chapter, "The Table," p.66- Arabic edition). Ibn Mas'ud said,

"We used to participate in holy battles led by Allah's Apostle and we had no wives with us. At that time, he allowed us to marry women with a temporary contract and recited to us this verse, 'Oh you who believe, make not unlawful the good things which Allah (God) has made lawful for you'" (5:87).

This famous story is recorded also in Zad al-Ma'ad by Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya (part 5, p. 111). In Sahih Muslim, exposition of Nawawi (Vol. 3 pp. 553, 554), he indicated that Muhammad had allowed his followers to have [...] [temporary marriage] with women for a dress !

Sahih Muslim

It was proven that contractual marriage was permissible at the beginning of Islam. It used to be practiced during a journey or a raid, or when it was "necessary" and there was a lack of women. In one of Ibn Abu'Umar's episodes, it said that it was admissible at the inception of Islam, especially when "there was a need for it".

Also, we read the following,

"The contractual marriage was lawful before the campaign of Khaybar; then it became unlawful in the day of the campaign. Then it was made lawful again in the day of Mecca's conquest. After three days, it was prohibited. The episodes concerning the lawfulness (of the contractual marriage) in the day of the conquest are not ambiguous and it is not permissible to forfeit it. There is nothing that may inhibit the repetition of practicing the contractual marriage again, and God is the omniscient, and the scholars have agreed to regard the contractual marriage as a temporary legal marriage, which does not entail any inheritance. The separation occurs as soon as the date of the agreement expires, and it does not require any legal divorce. Ibn'Abbas used to preach its lawfulness" (pp. 553,554 volume 3 Sahih Moslem).

Actually Sahih of Muslim (in the same volume 3) records for us what Muhammad's followers did when he allowed them to practice this. They used to meet a woman who belonged to one of the tribes (children of Amir) and attempt to seduce her by offering her either a dress or some dates or flour (p. 556). They spent three days with [...] [her]. Also Sahih of Muslim describes for us in detail some moral scandals of which Muhammad approved. It also recounts that

Muhammad himself used to bring the women to his followers or send a herald to proclaim that it is permissible to sign contractual marriages (p.555 Vol. 3).

Ismail Ibn Kathir

In his famous book, "The Prophetic Biography", he tells us the following in part 3:

"The prohibition of the contractual marriage took place in the day of the Khaybar campaign. Yet it had been established in Sahih of Muslim that Muhammad allowed them again to (sign) a contractual marriage in the Day of Mecca's conquest. Then he prohibited it. The Shafi'i said: 'I do not know any other thing which was made lawful, then prohibited, then made lawful again, then unlawful except the contractual marriage, which was prohibited in the year in which Mecca was conquered, then after that it became lawful'" (pp. 365,366).

Ibn Hisham recorded the same text in part 4, p.55.

Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya

In part 3, pp. 459, Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya repeated this same statement of al-Shafi'i. He also said on p.345:

"After the death of Muhammad, Ibn'Abbas made it lawful when there was a need for it. He used to say that the apostle prohibited it when it was dispensable, but it was made lawful when it became a necessity."

He also says on p.46 1:

"Ibn Mas'ud said: 'I made it lawful when it became indispensable for a man.'"

Imam al-Baydawi

He agrees with all the above in his famous book, "The Interpretation of the Baydawi". He says,

"The purpose of the contractual marriage is the mere pleasure [...] with a woman, and her own enjoyment in what she has given" (p. 108).

I believe that all those scholars were very lucid in their statements and it is sufficient for us. They are Ibn'Abbas, Ibn Mas'ud, Sahih al Bukhari, Sahih Muslim, Ibn Hisham, Ibn Kathir, Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya and al-Imam al-Baydawi. Those scholars are recognized by all. Muslims and all contemporary scholars agree absolutely.

The Contemporary Scholars

1. The Saudi scholars: In the context of their interpretation of the Sahih al Bukhari (Vol. 7, p.36), they indicate:

"Nikah-al-Muta (marriage of pleasure) means temporary marriage for a limited period of time. This type of marriage was allowed in the early days of Islam."

2. In his book, "Nur al-Yaqin" ("The Light of Certainty"), the Sheikh al-Khudary says,

"The contractual marriage, which was a marriage for a definite time, had been practiced since the inception of Islam" (p. 207).

3. The scholar Musa al-Musawi

in his famous book, "The Shi'ites and the Reformation", he lucidly tells us:

"All the legists believe that Muhammad made this matter lawful at the inception of Islam" (p. 108).

4. The current Sheikh of Islam, Muhammad Mutawalli al-sha-rawi, indicates in his book, "al-Fatawi" ("The Legal Opinions"),

"The Imam Fakhr al-Din al-Razi, leading other scholars, mentioned that contractual marriages were made lawful by the prophet and they were not abolished nor rescinded, but many scholars said that this matter was abolished later and that Muhammad, after making it lawful for a particular time during Islamic history, prohibited it" (p. 26).

We say to Dr. Musawi and to Sheikh al-Sha'rawi: Your statement that all the legists believe that Muhammad made it lawful at the inception of Islam is

sufficient for us. This statement and this acknowledgment are what we want the reader to know. It is evident, however, that the scholars who said that this practice was not abolished or prohibited were among the most esteemed scholars such as Ibn'Abbas, Ibn Mas'ud, and the Imam Fakhr al-Razi. In his book, "The History of Islamic Law", Dr. Ahmad Shalabi states that Ibn'Abbas said that it is possible to allow contractual marriages when they are necessary (p. 190). Ibn Kathir also emphasizes in his book, "al-Bidaya Wa al-Nihaya" ("The Beginning and the End"), Vol. 8, p.300, that Ibn'Abbas was of the opinion that contractual marriage should be made lawful. In his Sahih, al-Bukhari records this dialogue,

"I heard Ibn Abbas when he was asked about Muta (pleasure) with women, and he permitted this kind of marriage. Only a slave of his said to him, 'That is only when it is badly needed and women are scarce.' At that Ibn Abbas said, 'Yes'" (Vol. 7, p. 37).

Who is Ibn Abbas?

All the scholars acknowledge that he is of the opinion that the contractual marriage should be made lawful when it is needed, and he believes that its ordinance is still applicable and has not been abolished. If we open Vol. 8 of Ibn Kathir's book, "al-Bidaya We al-Nihaya" (pp. 295-307), we come across ample references pertaining to Ibn' Abbas' highly esteemed status among Muhammad's relatives and companions in regard to his knowledge and thought. We would like to allude briefly to some of what is said about him.

Ibn Kathir says:

"Ibn 'Abbas is the most knowledgeable person among the people as to what God has revealed to Muhammad. Umar Ibn al-Khattab used to say that the interpreter of the Qur'an is Ibn'Abbas. He was accustomed to telling him: 'You have acquired a knowledge which we never received. You are the most expert in the book of God'" (pp. 299, 300).

Ibn'Abbas was the official legist of the Islamic law during the era of 'Umar Ibn al-Khattab, and 'Uthman Ibn 'Affan. When he died, Muhammad's friend said,

"This nation has been afflicted with an incurable tragedy because Ibn'Abbas was the most knowledgeable among the people. We always needed him from sunrise to sunset."

These references to Ibn'Abbas, Muhammad's cousin, are sufficient to convince the most skeptical of the importance of Ibn'Abbas' status. It is well known that the argument of Ibn' Abbas was strong and it was conclusive to the continuation of the practice of temporary contractual marriage because Muhammad made it lawful then unlawful, then he made it lawful again when it was necessary.

Yet, even if we assume that Ibn'Abbas (who was the most knowledgeable among people of what God had revealed to Muhammad) was mistaken, as well as Ibn Mas'ud al-Razi and many other scholars, and that Abu Bakr was also wrong since he allowed people to practice this matter during his reign; even if we assume that Muhammad made it unlawful permanently after he made it permissible, and that all those people were wrong, we still have this pressing, unanswerable question: Why did Muhammad make this disgraceful matter lawful in the first place; i.e., adultery and immorality? Why, even for a short period of time, would he legalize prostitution and call it contractual marriage? Why did Muhammad tell his followers, "Make an agreement with any woman [...] for three days, then give her compensation, such as a robe." His companions did so. Later, Muhammad prohibited it, then made it lawful again according to the need!

We would like to refer to Dr. Musa al Musawi's statement in his book, "The Shi'ites and The Reformation", in which he says:

"This contractual marriage contains a license for licentiousness and degradation of woman's dignity, the thing which we do not find even among permissive societies in ancient and modern history" (p. 109).

Then he adds (p. III), concerning the characteristics of this marriage:

"This marriage is carried out without a witness. The period of this marriage could be a quarter of an hour, or a day, or any period of time. In it, it is permissible for a man to have collectively an unaccountable number of women at the same time. The woman may not inherit her husband's possessions, and a man does not give alimony to the spouse. Divorce is also carried out without a witness. This marriage is nothing but a license [...] [to immorality] provided that the woman is not married to another man."

Dr. Musa has a Ph.D. in Islamic law from the University of Tehran. He taught Islamic philosophy and was elected as President of the Supreme Counsel of West America. Of course, Dr. Musawi's criticism of the contractual marriage is appropriate. He indicates that this type of marriage has been abolished, yet he

acknowledges (p.108 of his book) that all the scholars and legists without exception say that Muhammad made it lawful for his companions from the very beginning.

My friend, we had to discuss the issue of contractual marriage, or "legal prostitution" (as some would like to call it) in detail, but this prolongation is significant because this is an important matter for our practical life. It is also related to the dignity of women and reveals Muhammad's view of women as being nothing more than tools for pleasure.

Fire In Hell—Most Of Its Inhabitants Are Women

Muhammad, the prophet of Islam, expresses clearly that most of those who enter hell are women, not men. None of the scholars deny these statements. We will quote only contemporary Azhar scholars of Egypt.

In the "Liwa al-Islami" magazine which was issued on August 13, 1987, under the title, "Women In Tradition", we read the following:

"The apostle of God said: 'Oh assembly of women, give charity, even from your jewelry, for you (comprise) the majority of the inhabitants of hell in the day of resurrection'" (p. 21).

Of course, the Azhar scholars are the people most acquainted with Muhammad's sayings.

Ancient Scholars

These scholars are quoted from Sahih of al-Bukhari (Vol. 7, p.96),

"Muhammad said: 'I saw Paradise and I stretched my hand to pluck a bunch of grapes, then I saw Hell (fire), and I have never before seen such a horrible sight as that the majority of its dwellers were women.' The people asked, 'O Allah's apostle, what is the reason for that?' He replied, 'Because of their ungratefulness.' It was said, 'Do they disbelieve in Allah (God)?' He replied, 'They are not thankful to their husbands and they are ungrateful for the favors done to them. Even if you do some good to one of them all your life when she sees some harshness from you she will say, "I have never seen any good from

you.""

The same text is repeated in Vol. 1, p.83. In Vol. 7 of the same book (p.94), Muhammad says,

"I stood at the gate of the fire and saw that the majority of those who entered it were women."

In the Mishkat al-Masabih (p. 14), we encounter the following exciting episode about Muhammad who, when met by some women, had the following conversation (Mishkat al Masabih p. 14),

"Allah's messenger went out to the place of worship and he passed by the women and said to them, 'O women, give charity, for I have been shown that the majority of the inmates of Hell are amongst you.' They said: 'Allah's Apostle, wherefore?' He said, 'It is because of the fact that you curse one another very much and show ungratefulness to your husbands.'"

It seems that Muhammad, the prophet of Islam, utters meaningless statements because who can say that only women curse each other? Do not men behave the same way in their quarrels? Do not men kill each other in bitter wars? Who said that only women, if they suffer from their husband's abuses, forget all the good characteristics of their spouses? Do not men cheat on their wives, abandon them and divorce them for the most insignificant reasons or for no reason at all? Do not Muslim men marry two, three, even four wives at a time, causing deep psychological pain and material loss for their wives? It is nonsense to say that the majority of the people in the fires of hell are women because they curse each other and they do not acknowledge the merits of their husbands!

It is nonsense to make these accusations or to label women in general. Even if Muhammad had painful experiences with his various wives so that he almost divorced them (as we will see), he still should not have issued verdicts against all women.

How miserable women are in Muhammad's view! He orders men to scourge them, forces young girls to marry against their will, and exploits single women as tools of pleasure. He also declares that the majority of people in hell are women!

"Women Are Short Of Faith And Intelligence"— Muhammad Said

The Egyptian contemporary scholar Sheikh al-Sha'rawi stresses the fact that Muhammad uttered this statement. This is recorded in Vol. 4, p.21 of his famous book, "You Ask And Islam Answers". Al-Sha'rawi, who is regarded as the Sheikh of Islam, relies on the former recognized scholars. We encounter the following dialogue in the Sahih of al-Bukhari (Vol. I, p. 83) and in the Mishkat al-Masabih (p.15) which took place between Muhammad and some women:

"Muhammad said: 'I have seen that you, in spite of being deficient in mind and religion, rob even a wise man of his senses.' They said: 'Allah's messenger, where lies our deficiency of reason and faith?' He said: 'Is not the evidence (testimony) of a woman equal to half the evidence of a man?' They said: 'Yes.' He said: 'This is because of the deficiency of your minds (mental status). Is it not a fact that when you enter the period of menses, you neither observe prayer nor observe fast?' They said, 'Yes.' Then he said: 'This is the deficiency in your faith.'"

"Women are short of faith and intelligence!" A strange statement uttered by Muhammad which is an obvious insult to the women who asked him! Why, Why, Muhammad? He responds with the above-mentioned, weird reasons. If God does not command women to fast or to pray during their menstrual period, why should He regard this matter as a lack of faith and religion? Is it because they obey God's orders? Or is prayer a mere physical exercise of standing up and prostrating? Or is it a matter of lifting the heart up to God at any time?

What about the woman's testimony in court? According to Islamic law, the testimony of a woman is equal to one half of a man's testimony. This is one of the incomprehensible, unjustifiable Qur'anic laws which is regarded as another insult to women. If Muhammad attempted to justify this on the basis of women's lack of faith and intelligence, it would be an excuse which is worse than an offense. Thus, when Muhammad tried to justify his attitude, he really rendered women another insult especially by claiming that a woman is equal to half a man.

A Female Inherits Only Half Of A Male's Portion

A female inherits only half of a male's portion and her testimony is regarded as half a man's testimony. Though the general public is not aware of

this fact, the Qur'anic text is very blunt concerning this matter, and is also acknowledged by all the Muslim scholars without exception.

First, concerning an inheritance, The Qur'an clearly indicates:

"Allah chargeth you concerning your children—to the male a portion equivalent to that of two females" (Chapter 4: 11).

This is in regard to a man's offspring, whether they are males or females. The same concept is applied to the brothers and sisters of a deceased person. The Qur'an says:

"If there be brethren - men and women - unto the male, the equivalent of the portion of two females" (Surah 4: 176).

This matter is a well-known fact and practiced all over the Islamic world.

Al-Bukhari, al-Jalalan and al-Baydawi

The Bukhari alluded to it (part 6, p.55), as well as the Jal-alan in their famous commentary (p.65). We read:

"A male may have the portion of two females if they are related to each other. He takes half of the inheritance and the two females take the other half. If the male has one sister only, she takes one-third of it and he takes two-thirds" (p.65).

On page 66, the Jalalan says:

"If he leaves his parents an inheritance, his mother takes one-third and the father two-thirds."

Al-Baydawi (page 104) and the rest of the scholars follow the same interpretation which is based on the indisputable Qur'anic verse.

The Contemporary Scholars

1) In his book, "Islam in the Face of Modern Challenges", Abu al-a'la al-

Mawdudi states conclusively:

"There is no room in Islam for the idea that a woman's portion of an inheritance be equivalent to the man's portion. The prohibitory reason is one of decisive Islamic laws" (p.264).

The Sheikh al-Sha'rawi

He also acknowledges this fact in part II of his book, "You Ask and Islam Answers":

"The portion for a woman from an inheritance is half of the man's portion because a woman is not responsible for her livelihood but rather the man is the responsible one (p 39, part 2).

French Philosopher, Roge Jaroudi

Even the French philosopher, Roge Jaroudi, who was "converted" to Islam reiterates in the magazine, "The League of the Islamic World" (the issue of February/March, 1984), the same logic of al-Sha'rawi. Jaroudi says:

"Concerning the inheritance, it is true that the female inherits half of the portion her brother inherits, but in view of that, the responsibility of taking care of her falls on her brother's shoulder" (p.39).

Dr. Ahmad Shalabi repeated the same meaning in his book, "The History of Islamic Legislation" (p. 137).

The statement of al-Sha'rawi and the French philosopher that a woman should inherit half of the portion because man is the one who bears responsibility for her livelihood is a meaningless and unacceptable justification because it is very possible that a woman may be much more in need of the money than her brother. Why should she receive only half of what her brother inherits from his parents? Is it not possible that the sister may be married to a poor man and have many children, while her brother may be a rich businessman or single without responsibilities?

Even if the sister is still single, why should her brother receive double her portion

from the inheritance and have control over her expenditures? He may spend the money on his own pleasures while his sister could be wiser and more prudent than her brother, who may be younger than she. These situations happen daily in Arab and Islamic countries. Any man takes twice what his sister receives. The only reason for it is the inequality between females and males. Why does this happen? Al-Mawdudi tells us it is because this is one of the decisive Islamic laws based on an indisputable Qur'anic verse in the Chapter of Women. This is the inequality of unfair Islamic law.

Secondly, what about a woman's testimony before the court and in business contracts? In the Chapter of the Cow (282), we read:

"From among your men, two witnesses, and if two men be not at hand then a man and two women of such as you approve as witnesses, so that if the one erreth (through forgetfulness) the other will remember (and we read about what Muhammad said about the testimony of a woman)."

The Ancient Scholars

Scholars have agreed upon the interpretation of this verse which is recorded in the chapter of the Cow concerning the testimony of women because it is very conspicuous and unquestionable. We would like to refer briefly here to the statements of al-Baydawi and the Jalalan. The Jalalan says (on page 41):

"There must be two adult free Muslim witnesses. If they are not available then (let it be) a man and two women. (The reason for having) numerous women is that if one of them forgot something because of lack of intelligence, the other one would remind her."

These are the same words of Muhammad and the Qur'an.

On page 64, the Baydawi says:

"The two men must be two free Muslims, or one man and two women. (The reason for having) numerous women is because of their lack of intelligence and to obtain accurate information."

But the statement of the Jalalan and Bawdawi that the witness should be "two free Muslims" is because Islam does not accept the testimony of non-Muslims or slaves, as we will see later.

Nobody denies this about Islam, including all the Azhar scholars as well as the Saudi and Pakistani scholars. Among them, the Grand Imam Dr. Mahmud Shaltut emphasizes this point in his book, "Islam: A Dogma And A Law" (p.237).

In its February/March, 1985 issue (p.17), the magazine, "The League of the Islamic World", records for us an incident which took place in Pakistan during the enactment of some of the Islamic laws. The magazine says:

"Three groups of women demonstrated against the new law which gives women only half of the men's rights when they sign business contracts. These groups which are located in Lahore in Pakistan, say that this law, derived from Islamic Law, intends to insult women and debase their dignity."

It is obvious that any intelligent, thinking man who enjoys a sensitive conscience would object to this unfair Islamic law, just as these female groups objected. How could a woman's testimony be regarded as half of a man's testimony in court and when signing business contracts? The same magazine also published on the same page, the response of Dr. Aly Farrukha, Director of Islamic Studies in Chicago, in which he says:

"The issue of a woman's testimony in court is a divine order which necessitates that a woman who is a witness should be accompanied by another woman in order to remind her if she forgets (some details) and to correct her if she makes an error. This verdict does not intend to insult women but rather to help them."

This is the conclusion of Dr. Farruka, who senses that this law really does insult women, but tries to defend Muhammad, the Qur'an and Islamic law. However, the insult is inevitable and there is no way to avoid it. The statement of Dr. Aly that there is a need for two women in opposition to one man in the case of testimony in order to help the women not to forget or to be corrected if she makes an error, is a polite statement, though it does not negate that in Islam, women are treated as second class and cannot be trusted to be accurate when witnessing in court.

Actually Muhammad was more pointed than Dr. Aly Farrukha. He expressed his opinion without any vagueness. He says that the reason that a woman's testimony is regarded as equal to one half of a man's testimony is not to help her but because she is short of intelligence!

Men Belong To A Higher Level Than Women—They Are Better Than Women

The Qur'an declares to us in Chapter 2:22 that men are a degree above women. It also says in Chapter 4:34:

"Men are in charge of women because Allah has made the one of them excel the other."

The Ancient Scholars

On page 79, the Jalalan says:

"Men have been given authority over women to discipline and control them by the merits of knowledge, intelligence and custody, etc., which God bestowed on some over others."

In his commentary, page 111, the Baydawi says:

"God preferred man over woman, and the reason for the bestowing of this verse (4:34) is a well-known episode which says that a man from the helpers beat his wife, whose name was Habiba, the daughter of Zayd. Her father took her to the apostle of God (to complain). Muhammad said: "Let us punish him." But God sent down this verse 4:34. The woman returned home without having her husband punished. Muhammad said: 'I intended to do something (that is, to punish the man), but God willed otherwise, and what God wills is better.'"

This famous incident was the reason God sent down this verse which prefers men to women and prohibits the retribution of men if they abuse their wives. This episode is mentioned also in the commentary of the Jalalan (page 69) as well as in the suyuti's book, "Reasons for Sending the Verses From God" (Asbab al-Nuzul, p.75). Suyuti tells us that the women said to Muhammad:

"My husband beat me and left some marks on my face. In spite of that, the man was not punished though Muhammad wanted to do so but the just God, the God of equality, declined and did not allow Muhammad to punish the man for abusing his wife."

What a compassionate God who sympathizes with relentless men! Is this the

God who honors women? This God revealed a verse which confirms that men are better than women and above them by one degree, and that they have the right to discipline them. However, what concerns us here is to stress the point that the Qur'an says that men are a degree above women and better than them.

The Contemporary Scholars

It is sufficient here to quote the Azhar scholars: Mrs. Iman Kamil corresponded with the Azhar scholars and Sheikhs inquiring about this critical subject in order to comprehend the meaning of the verse under discussion (4:34). The following is her question and the answer she received as they were published in "Liwa al-Islamic" ("The Islamic Banner") in its issue of July 4, 1985, page 6. The question was:

"What is the interpretation of the Qur'anic verse: 'Men are the managers of the affairs of women for that God preferred in bounty one of them over another?'"

The answer of the Azhar scholars was:

"Abu al-Hasan al-Basri said: 'A woman came to the prophet complaining against her husband, who slapped her face. The apostle of God said: "(He must be) punished." But God sent down this verse, and the woman returned home empty-handed.' The meaning of his saying: 'Manager' is that a man is the woman's lord and her disciplinarian whenever she disobeys him. God has explained that the reason for this lordship is that men excel women."

What more can be said after this issue has become so obvious? The reader can easily discern if God is the one who composed it to please the powerful men among his followers.

The Gospel in various places indicates that man is the head of the woman; that is, he sacrifices himself for her sake as Christ is the head of the church; that is, He gave himself for it. But it is obvious from the comment of the ancient scholars as well as the Azhar scholars that Islam does not penalize a man when he abuses his wife because men are superior to women! The story is well known, and it was cited by all the Muslim scholars without exception.

The Muhallil—Men Who Make Something Lawful

Who is a Muhallil? A person who marries a divorced woman even for one night in order to make it possible for her ex-husband to reinstate her.

The Qur'an, as well as Muhammad say clearly that if a man divorces his wife, he can reinstate her, but if he said to her: "You are divorced three times" or if he divorces her three times, he would not be able to get her back easily. In order to reinstate her, she has to get married to another man [...] at least once before the second man divorces her, then she can go back to her first husband. This practice is in vogue all over the Islamic world and is practiced whenever there is a need for it because there is a well-known Qur'anic verse on this subject.

Was this the verdict of Muhammad and the Qur'an? Muhammad not only supported it, but even ordered a woman to practice it if she wished to go back to her first husband. It is recorded in an episode which all Muslim scholars acknowledge as authentic. But let us first scrutinize the Qur'anic verse. It is recorded in the Sura of Cow:

"And if he divorced her, then she is not lawful unto him thereafter until she has wed another husband" (Surah 2:230).

This second husband is called by Islam "The Muhallil" because he makes the woman lawful to go back to her ex-husband by marrying her for only one night, then later divorcing her so that she can go back to her first husband. All the scholars agree on this interpretation of that verse. An example is found in the Zomokchory (Vol. 1, p.368, Alkashaf), Jalalan (page 32), and al-Baydawi (page 50). The Baydawi says plainly that a real marriage (not a marriage in name only) must take place between the Muhallil and the wife. Also, the Baydawi recounts for us the famous episode which occurred between Muhammad and the wife of Rifa'a. This incident is recorded in most of the Islamic books such as Asbab al-Nuzl by al-Suyuti (pages 45,46), also Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya alluded to it several times in part 5 of his book, "Zad al-Ma'ad". In part seven (page 136) Sahih al-Bukhari quoted it several times. This is the story as it is recorded in the Shih and other books:

"The wife of Rifa'a Al-Qurazi came to Allah's apostle and said, 'O Allah's Apostle, Rifa'a divorced me irrevocably. Afterward, I married Abdul-Rahman bin Az-Zubair, [...] [but it didn't work].' Allah's apostle said to her, 'Perhaps you want to return to Rifa'a? Nay, you cannot, until you and Abdul-Rahman consummate your marriage.'"

In his book, "Asbab al-Nuzul" (p.46), the Suyuti states that this woman came to Muhammad and told him:

"Abdul-Rahman (the Muhallil whom she wed after she was divorced) has divorced me without [...] [consuming the marriage]. May I go back to my ex-husband?' Muhammad said to her: 'No, that is not permissible until Abdul-Rahman [...] consumes the marriage with you first, then you may go back to Rafa'a.'"

This incident is confirmed and recorded in al-Baydawi, al-Suyuti, al-Bukhari and the rest of the sources. Al-Bukhari mentions another similar story in which the woman receives the same answer from Muhammad because the order of the Qur'anic verse is very plain: "... until she has wed another husband."

We wonder (and the free human conscience wonders with us) if there is more insult and more humiliation to the dignity and honor of a woman and her husband than this? Muhammad is supposed to either allow her to return to her husband, Rafa'a, or to stay away from him, but to impose such a condition on her is to humiliate her, her husband and children, for who is the man who would allow such things to happen to his divorced wife? Or is there a respectable woman who would be inclined to carry out such a practice?

The contemporary scholars who defend this verdict argue that Muhammad enacted this law to make it difficult for a husband to divorce his wife three times. A man, according to Islamic law, may divorce his wife by saying: "You are divorced... you are divorced... you are divorced" or "You are divorced by three" in a moment of anger which he later regrets and makes every effort to restore her for himself and her children. Of course, she would like to go back to her husband and her children who might be still very young or teenagers. Thus, is it comprehensible, according to all standards of mercy, chastity, purity and dignity of a woman, her husband and children, for Muhammad to state that it is not permissible for her to return to her husband and children unless she [...] [weds another man] at least once before she is restored to her husband and children.

Would the reader agree with this verdict imposed on a mother, wife or daughter? Oh God have mercy on these people and protect them from the laws of the Islamic religion.

You may say, "All the evidence which you have presented concerning the alleged claim that Islam honors women is sufficient to remove this deceptive veil. Muhammad's perspective towards women has become very apparent. Why

do you want to present additional arguments?" True, the aforementioned issues are sufficient, but after you read the following discussions, the picture will become even clearer.

Polygamy, Mistresses and Concubines

The Islamic religion is very lenient when it comes to the issue of marriage and divorce which causes serious emotional, psychological and economic disasters to women, in order to satisfy man's desires. The Qur'an allows a man to be married to four women at the same time. If he wishes to marry other women, all he has to do is to divorce one of them and to replace her with another. Several verses emphasize this point. However, the reader might not be aware that the Qur'an allows a man to own as many women as he wants in addition to the four legal wives; that is, he is permitted to have concubines, mistresses and maid-slaves. In this respect, Ibn Hazm indicates (Vol. 6, part 9, pp. 441 and 467) that,

"No one is allowed to wed to more than four women, but he is permitted however, in addition to them. to buy (women), as many as he wants."

Thus, we are going to see that Muhammad, his successors and his relatives owned (in addition to their many wives) concubines and maid-servants who were taken as prisoners of war or purchased. [...] This is, of course, in addition to the contractual marriages which Muhammad permitted when it was "necessary". A Muslim is not allowed lawfully to have more than four wives at the same time. Only Muhammad had the right to marry as many as he wanted because this was one of his distinctive privileges because he was a prophet and an apostle! There are various indisputable verses which the angel Gabriel supposedly revealed to Muhammad, allowing him to enjoy this status; however, we will confine our study to the general practice of polygamy and easy divorce.

The Qur'anic Verses And The Comments Of The Scholars

The Sura of the Parties: 50

The Qur'an stresses that it is lawful for a man to have several wives and to own concubines. The Qur'an says,

"We are aware that we enjoined on them (the believers) concerning their wives and those whom their right hands possess."

We read the same text in Sura of Women: 3 and Sura of the Believers: 5 which indicates:

"The captive from war that your right hand possessed" (Sura 4:3).

War bounties, whether they were women or children or money, used to be distributed among Muslim fighters after Muhammad received one-fifth. Therefore, most Muslims (led by Muhammad the prophet) had many captive women who were regarded as owned slaves and concubines. It happened that in one of the invasions (Awtas Hunayn) that some Muslim warriors among Muhammad's companions captured some women whose husbands were still alive. Some Muslims refrained from [...] [wedding them] out of shame, but Muhammad told them that it was lawful for them to [...] [wed] them because they were what "their right hand possessed". Then God sent a Qur'anic verse (chapter 4:24) making it lawful.

In regard to the concubines, the Baydawi, on page 102 says:

"A man is not forced to treat the concubines equally as he is obliged to do with the (legal) wives."

A little provision (food and clothes) were sufficient.

The Jalalan says on page 64:

"The maid-slaves do not have rights as the wives."

If we examine the volumes of Ibn Timiyya, we read in volume 32, p.7 I the following plain text:

"It is lawful for a Muslim to have [...] [as many concubines] as he wishes of those whom his right hand possesses, but he is allowed to wed four women only. Yet, God has bestowed on the apostle of God (enough) strength to marry more than four women. Also God allowed him to marry without paying a dowry. Muslims are not prohibited from having more than four concubines provided that no two sisters are among them."

This is similar to the above mentioned quotation from Ibn Hazm. In the same volume (page 89), Ibn Timiyya says boastfully,

"Islam has made it lawful to its followers to ["consume marriage"] through weddings as well as with what the right hand possesses, while (for Jews and Christians) they may [...] [marry] them only. They are not (allowed to [...] [have concubines] with) what their hand possesses. The beginning of slavery were the captives of war.

"The war bounty has not become lawful for any nation except the nation of Muhammad by the evidence of sound tradition. Muhammad said, 'God has preferred me over the prophets by making the bounties of war lawful to me. This was not made lawful to anyone before me.'"

In this respect, the Gospel is very clear and denotes that a man must have only one wife :

"Let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband... let the husband render the debt to his wife, and the wife also in like manner to the husband." (I Cor. 7:2-3)

The Harmful Consequences of Polygamy

The consequences of polygamy such as jealousy, envy, quarrels, and conflict among the wives are evident. A woman has to wait for several days for her turn to enjoy the love and the care of her husband; that is, if he has preserved some of his love for her and for the children. A man who has four wives and numerous concubines begets, of course, many children. So what can he do to please all of them?

Muhammad himself was the first to know the nature of the quarrels which take place among the various wives as the result of his personal experiences with his wives, who used to join forces against him (Bukhari part 3, p. 204). Later, we will discuss Muhammad's wives' conspiracies, especially those of A'isha. This particular problem made Muhammad express his displeasure to his son-in-law, Ali Ibn Abi Talib, who was married to Fatima, Muhammad's daughter, when he wished to marry a second wife besides Fatima. This incident is recorded by all the chroniclers such as Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya (part 5, p. 117); Ibn Hisham (part 4, p. 114); as well as al-Bukhari, who mentioned it twice (part 7, pp. 115 and 152). Let us read together what is recorded in the Bukhari:

"I heard Allah's apostle who was in the pulpit saying 'Bano-hisham bin Al-

Mughira have requested me to allow them to marry their daughter to Ali bin Abi Taleb, but I do not give them permission and will not give permission unless Ali divorces my daughter because Fatima is a part of my body, and I hate what she hates to see and what hurts her."

So Muhammad knew well that marrying more than one woman hurts the first wife. Then, why did he wed so many women causing so much harm to each one of them? Why did he permit Muslims to practice polygamy? Ali's incident is rather strange, but it also reveals Muhammad's consuming selfishness. According to the account of Ibn Hisham, the girl's name whom Ali intended to marry was Juwayriyya. Muhammad used to encourage people to practice polygamy. Bukhari tells us (Vol. 7, p. 124) that Muhammad, while talking to a man, discovered that he had just married a divorced woman. He told him to find himself another virgin girl.

It is obvious that polygamy was the rule practiced by Muhammad's successors and companions. For example, Umar Ibn al-Khattab married seven women in the course of his life (including those whom he divorced), in addition to two maid-slaves who were called Fakhiyya and Lahiyya. Uthman Ibn Affan was wed to eight women. After the death of Fatima, Ali Ibn Abi Talib (to whom Muhammad denied permission to marry a second wife beside Fatima) married ten women and housed nineteen concubines and maid-slaves for a total of 29 women. This is Ali, the cousin of Muhammad and the fourth Caliph who assumed power after the death of Uthman.

When we indicate the number of wives as seven, ten, etc., we do not mean that those men housed them at the same time because it was not admissible for any Moslem to have more than four wives at any given time, but these men would "taste" the beauty of a woman and then plan to enjoy the "taste" of another woman without any regard to the feelings of the first wife. If it was necessary, he would divorce her for no reason but to be able to get married to another woman without exceeding a total number of four wives.

This situation accurately applies to al-Hasan Ibn Ali, of whom Muhammad said that he is the master of the youth of paradise. This Hasan (Muhammad's grandson) during the course of his life, married seventy women and begot thirty-one children. Sometimes he used to divorce two women in a day. Even his father urged the residents of Iraq not to marry their daughters to him because he was a man who constantly divorced his wives, but the Kufa's people continued to marry their daughters to him hoping that their daughters would bear children who would be descendants of the prophet Muhammad.

All these episodes are recorded in the biographies, such as the Bidaya and the Nihaya, by Ibn Kathir, V. VII and VIII; also, the Chronicles of the Caliphs, by Suyuti, who indicated that the Hasan was accustomed to divorcing four women and marrying another four instead. He also mentioned that the number of maid-slaves during the era of Yazid Ibn Abd-ul-Malik was in the hundreds, and grew into the thousands during the time of the Abbasid Caliphs. Al-Mutawakki, one of the Abbasid Caliphs, housed about four thousand maid-slaves.

The reader can refer to the "Book of Al-Aghani" ("The Book of Songs") by al-Isfahani; the "Akhbar al-Msa" ("The Necklace of the Dove") by Ibn Hazm, and "al-Imta wa al-Mu'anasa" ("Entertainment and Friendly Sociability") by Abu Hayyan al-Tawhidi to obtain more information. In Vol. VIII of his book, Ibn Kathir reports that al-Mughira Ibn Shu'ba (who was one of Muhammad's greatest friends and the ruler over some Islamic districts) had been wed to three hundred women!

The Qur'an states clearly that a woman is like a piece of property which a husband can replace easily. The Qur'an says in Sura of Women (20):

"If you wish to exchange one wife for another and you have given unto one of them a sum of money take nothing from it."

What a glorious Qur'an and what a merciful God is Allah! This is the only condition for the replacement: If a man intends to replace a woman with another, he is not allowed to take from the first woman an object or money he has already given her at the time of the marriage. No other conditions are stated. A man is free to divorce his wife for a reason or for no reason, and at any time he wishes. And he has the right (if he divorces his wife) to reinstate her without her permission during a certain period of time (several months) as long as there are no other conditions pronounced in the marriage contract. In volume 32, p. 238, Ibn Timiyya taught that men can divorce their wives, but that women are not allowed to divorce their husbands.

Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya emphasizes in his book, "Zad al-Ma'ad" (part 5, page 278) that the knot of marriage is in the hand of the man and only he has the right to divorce.

The Easiness of Divorce

Divorce in Islam is made very easy. By uttering the phrase, "You are divorced," the divorce takes place. In part 7, page 145 of al-Bukhari we read, "A

man can suddenly tell his wife, 'I am not in need of you.' Then the verdict is to be given according to his intention."

Most often, that wife would need his support and help, but that is no concern of Islamic law as long as the man does not need that wife. Thus, the Qur'an says: "It is no sin for you if you divorce women" (Sura 2:236).

Most probably the man felt bored with that wife or he lusted after another woman who was younger and more beautiful. Since he was not able to support two women at the same time, he divorced one to marry the other. If the great men of Islam, the famous companions of the prophet and the Caliphs did so, what remained for the public but to follow the example of those great men of their religion in dealing with the matters of marriage and divorce?

The Qur'an allows this easy divorce. It does not impose certain conditions or limits on this painful action which causes a great deal of suffering among women, treating her as if she were a piece of furniture. Let us listen to the al-Bukhari as he explains to us (Part VII, pages 145-146) how this easy divorce takes place:

"If a man says to his wife, 'Go to your family,' then his intention is to be taken into consideration. Or if someone says to his wife, 'If you become pregnant, then you are divorced thrice'; then, if her pregnancy becomes apparent, she will be regarded as divorced irrevocably! If he wants her back she must marry another man first."

It is that easy for a man to divorce his wife if he wishes, even if she does not commit any wrongdoing. This often happens in Arab and Islamic countries without any regard to the woman's dignity. The husband says: "If this thing does not happen, my wife is divorced by three". These things actually happen, as the Bukhari said, and the wife finds herself divorced for reasons entirely unknown to her, because every divorce is lawful (except the divorce made in drunkenness) according to the Muslim scholars. As long as the husband was not drunk when he made the divorce, even if it was in a moment of anger, that divorce becomes lawful (refer to Bukhari, part VII, p. 145)

The Azhar scholars, when they were asked about that, gave the same answer: Every divorce is admissible except the divorce made by a drunkard. What a joke! Or what a tragedy! Daily Arabic newspapers are filled with such tragic news and the courts are overloaded with thousands of divorce suits which causes the eviction of children and wives who are helpless and dependent mainly on their husbands. This tragic situation made an Egyptian Muslim lady,

Dr. Nawal Sa'dawi (the great Egyptian writer and thinker), voice her objection loudly during a dialogue between her and the Azhar scholars by saying:

"I want to say that a Christian wife enjoys a secure married life compared to the Muslim woman because she is not afraid of a surprise divorce made by her husband in a day and a night" (Refer to al-Liwa al- Islami newspaper, issued on July 9,1987, page 6).

You are right Dr. Sadawi! You are acknowledging the truth as you describe the status of women in Islam. Your words have powerful effect because you are a Muslim and a woman also. But what could the Sheiks of Azhar tell you if this is the law of Islam and if Muhammad himself was allowed to divorce all his wives in one day and claimed that he received (through Gabriel) a verse inspired by God in which he threatened them. The verse:

"It may happen that His Lord—if he (the prophet) divorced you—will give him in your stead wives better than you" (Chapter 66:5).

What could the Azhar Sheikhs tell you if Muhammad himself had actually divorced one of his wives by telling her, "Go to your people?" She was the daughter of June, as the Bukhari remarked (page 131 of Vol. VII). He also divorced Hafsa, daughter of Umar Ibn al-Khattab, then brought her back, as well as his wife Sawda (daughter of Zam'a), then restored her to his household after she asked for his mercy, telling him: "I will give up my day (that is the day he allocated to Sawda) to A'isha," as we read in the "Book of Women of the Prophet " ("Nisa' al-Nabi") by Bint al-Shati (p. 125 and p.66 regarding Hafsa and Sawda).

This same author, who is a contemporary Muslim scholar and writer, said:

"When Muhammad intended to divorce Sawda or when he actually divorced her, she received the news with utmost bewilderment, and she almost fainted. She wept in the presence of Muhammad and said: 'Keep me and I assign the right of my night and day to your young wife A'isha' (p.66); he agreed. It is well known that this Sawda had served Muhammad very well and was very good to him and no one had accused her of any wrongdoing. But because of lack of beauty, he intended to divorce her."

Divorce in Christianity

In spite of escalating problems, and regardless of the nature of numerous causes (such as sickness or barrenness), it is not permissible for a divorce to take place among true Christians who learn from the Lord the meaning of love and humility. [Nevertheless, requests for divorce, according to specific cases, such as impotency, adultery, sickness, etc., are judged by the Holy-See.]

In the Gospel, we read the following dialogue between Christ and some of the Pharisees from among the Jewish religious leaders:

["And there came to Him the Pharisees tempting Him, and saying: Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause? Who answering, said to them: Have ye not read, that He who made man from the beginning, made them male and female? And He said: For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife, and they two shall be in one flesh. Therefore now they are not two, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let no man put asunder.

[They say to him: Why then did Moses command to give a bill of divorce, and to put away? He saith to them: Because Moses by reason of the hardness of your heart permitted you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it was not so. And I say to you, that whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be* for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and he that shall marry her that is put away, committeth adultery.] (Matt. 19:3-10)

[*Except it be: In the case of fornication, that is, of adultery, the wife may be put away: but even then the husband cannot marry another as long as the wife is living.]

A Woman is the Husband's Slave His Captive!

Readers may wonder if this is true. Is it possible that Islam and Muhammad say that a woman is a man's slave—his captive? Yes, my dear reader, this is a fact which no Muslim scholar denies. Let us scrutinize this matter which is really amazing when we read Muhammad's unquestionable statements.

Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya

In Zad al-Ma'ad (part V, p. 189), we read:

"In sound tradition, Muhammad called woman a 'aniya'. The 'ani' is a prisoner of war (or captive). The duty of the captive is to serve his master. There is no doubt that marriage is a sort of slavery as some of the former scholars indicated: Marriage is slavery, thus let each one of you be sure of the man to whom you would like to enslave your daughter."

This text tells us that according to sound Hadith (approved by all scholars), Muhammad said so. Therefore, scholars emphasize that a father must choose a good man for his daughter because marriage is slavery.

Ibn Qayyim states also (part V, page 188), "A woman must serve her husband because he has already paid the dowry, and if a man served his wife at home he would commit a grave sin."

Ibn Timiyya (Sheikh al-Islam)

He was very plain when he discussed this issue. In Vol. 32, p.262, Ibn Timiyya unquestionably agrees with the statement of the former scholars that marriage is slavery. He states that Umar Ibn al- Khattab himself is the one who uttered those words. Also, on pages 305-307, he remarks,

"If a woman said to her husband, 'Divorce me' and he responded by saying, 'I divorce you,' then this divorce is final and irrevocable for the husband because it is regarded a ransom by which a woman redeems herself from her husband, as a captive redeems herself from captivity. It is also permissible for any person to redeem the wife, as in the case of the redemption of the captive. As it is admissible for anyone to pay a ransom to the master of a slave to set him free, it is also allowable for a woman to set herself free from the slavery of the husband. The purpose of that is to disclaim the ownership and slavery of the woman in order to be free from his slavery, as in the case of freeing the slave and redeeming the captive."

Ibn Timiyya has repeated several times the phrase that the relationship of a wife to her husband is like a slave to his master—or like a prisoner of war.

Imam al-Nawawi

In his book, "Ryad al-Salihin" ("The Orchards of the Righteous Men", p 107), he repeats Muhammad's statement that "women are captives in your hands." He also adds:

"The apostle of God here likens the woman as she comes under the authority of her husband to a captive; and Muhammad uttered these words in his address to men in the farewell year."

These are the words of Muhammad himself concerning women, and these are the declarations of three of the greatest Muslim scholars: Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya, Ibn Timiyya and the Imam al-Nawawi. These three confirm, according to tradition, that Muhammad is the one who said that a woman is like a prisoner and a slave to a man. Thus a woman is not only less than a man by a degree, and enjoys only half of his rights, but she is less than him by dozens of degrees. She holds the status of a slave or a captive.

A Donkey and a Dog

This is exactly what A'isha said to the great Caliphs and companions when she remarked:

"You have put us on the same level with a donkey and a dog."

The question is why did A'isha make this statement to those great companions and scholars of the time of Muhammad. A'isha said that to Ali Ibn Abi Talib, Abdalla Ibn Abbas, Abu-zarr, Abu Hurayra, Anas Ibn Malik and others on whose authority most of Muhammad's Hadith and interpretations of the Qur'an were handed down. Why did you say that A'isha?

She said it because those pillars of Islam assured people that Muhammad said that if a man is praying and a donkey, a dog, or a woman passes in front of him, his prayer will not be acceptable, and he has to perform ablution (washing) again and repeat his prayer. None of the scholars question this matter which is repeated daily—whenever a woman passes in front of a man while he is praying or if a dog or a donkey walks in front of him. In this case, he has to wash himself again and repeat his prayer; otherwise his prayer will not be counted.

Ibn Hazm Confirms and Quotes

In his book, "al-Muhalla", "The Sweetened" (part 4, p. 8), Ibn Hazm says:

"A prayer is rescinded by a dog, whether it is passing by or not, and by a woman and a donkey!"

At the beginning of page 9, Ibn Hazm emphasizes that all the great companions of the prophet without exception attested to that. Then he records for us (page 11) that A'isha told them: "You have put us on the same level with a donkey and a dog." Why is it that if a man passes in front of a praying man his prayer is not repealed, while if a woman walks in front of him, the prayer must be repeated? Why is the presence of a woman regarded as similar to the presence of a donkey or a dog? The above-mentioned discussion does not need more comment.

Women are the Cause of Evil Omen

It is obvious that Sahih of al-Bukhari is a source upon which all of the Islamicists depend whenever they want to learn Muhammad's Hadith (sayings), and consequently, to know Islamic laws and ordinances which the Qur'an doesn't mention. If we open part VII of Sahih of al-Bukhari which is translated into English (page 21), we read:

"Allah's apostle said: 'Evil omen is in the woman, the house and the horse.'"

On the same page (21), we encounter the interpretation of the above statement as follows: "The evil omen of a woman is her bad character". The reader may wonder (if there is such a thing as an "evil omen") why it is said then that a woman who has bad character is the cause. Why it is not said that a bad person (in general, whether a male or female) may cause an evil omen; that is if there is such a thing as an evil omen since we do not believe in the existence of evil omen among true believers. Why is it always a woman? If a woman walks in front of a man while he prays, he has to repeat his prayer because it does not count. Since a woman has bad character, she causes an evil omen. In the first case, Muhammad equates her with a donkey and a dog. In the second case, he reduces her to the level of a horse and a house. The woman! Always the woman! She is always persecuted in Islam. Even Muhammad believed that the majority of the people in hell are women, as it was revealed to him.

Women have Crooked Characters

All the scholars confirm that Muhammad said that women have crooked characters. He also said that a husband should not attempt to straighten his wife of the perversity. He must enjoy her though she is still subject to this waywardness. In Sahih of al-Bukhari (part 7, p. 80) the following is recorded,

"Allah's Apostle said: 'The woman is like a rib: if you try to straighten her, she will break; so if you want to get benefit from her, do so while she still has some crookedness.'"

Also in "Riyadh al-Salihim" by Imam al-Nawawi (p. 106), we find a quote by Sahih of Muslim,

"Muhammad said, 'A woman was created from a crooked rib; thus she would never be straightened by any means. If you enjoy her, you do that along with her crookedness and if you endeavor to straighten her, you will break her, and breaking her is divorcing her.'"

We have here two questions: First, why is the woman the one who is crooked? Muhammad answers: "Because she is created from a crooked rib!" Is it possible that man is free from any crookedness? Can we not find one thousand women who would say, "My husband has many detestable characteristics. He is always drunk, gambling, or violent and abusive." Why is it always the woman who is crooked?

Then there is the other question which we cannot avoid: If there is a crookedness in a woman, why does the husband not attempt to straighten her in humility, love, prayer and understanding? Why does he have to leave her on her own without rendering any help lest the crooked rib breaks; namely, to be divorced? Why all this ill-advice by Muhammad? Do prophets tell the husband to scourge his wife or forsake her on the one hand and urge him to leave her alone with her crookedness on the other? Muhammad himself told his wives upon occasion that he would divorce them and replace them with other women.

The Sheikh al-Sharawi, the contemporary Sheikh of Islam in Egypt, acknowledges in his book, "You Ask and Islam Answers" (part II, p. 5) that Muhammad said this, but the Sharawi tries intelligently to justify Muhammad's statement by saying that Muhammad meant that the woman usually shows

compassion and is bent over her child like a crooked rib! If this is what Muhammad meant, then how are we to interpret his saying she will never be straightened by any means, it is impossible to change her, and men should not attempt to do so because that will be conducive to divorce, but they should rather enjoy women along with their crookedness? Is this crookedness a virtue, like showing tenderness towards a child? Crookedness is something bad and difficult to change or straighten.

The Sharawi also interprets Muhammad's testimony that women lack intelligence and faith as being not required to perform all the duties and ordinances of the religion; they lack faith by way of commission! We tell him: Do they lack intelligence by way of commission also? What about their testimony being regarded equal to a half man's testimony? Is that by way of commission also or lack of intelligence so that if one of them forgot something the other one would remind her? !

Women are Harmful to Men

This is another statement which all the scholars agree that Muhammad uttered against women. In part 7, p.22 of Sahih al-Bukhari, we read,

"The prophet said: 'I have not left any affliction more harmful to men than women.'"

The Imam al-Nawawi in his book, "Riyadh al-Salihin" (p. 110), reiterates that these words were spoken by Muhammad. Of course, Christianity rejects such statements and disapproves of all these accusations against women.

Lastly, we have to ask: If this was Muhammad's view of women, why then, did he possess so many wives, concubines and prisoners of war?

Conclusion

This is the true status of women according to Muhammad and to Islam. We have presented this discussion so that no one will say that Islam honors females, whether they are daughters, single or married.

° We have seen that the father has the right to force a daughter to marry

without her permission. She does not have any choice.

° Muhammad made it lawful for a man to have [...] [intimate] relationships with a single woman in lieu of some presents, then leave her without any rights. This is what is called in Islam "contractual marriage".

° As for married women, the mother of children, Muhammad, in the Qur'an, commanded men to scourge them (if they show any sign of disobedience) if instruction, admonishing, and abandoning their beds fail to bring forth any results. Scholars say that scourging should not lead to breaking bones, but to be a deterring element. A man scourged his wife and left some marks on her face. When she complained to Muhammad, he refrained from punishing him and claimed to have received a verse in which he declared that men are above women and better than them. Men are their custodians, entitled to discipline them and to deter them by punishment and beating.

° We also see that a married woman is a slave to her husband; she is his captive, his prisoner because marriage is a type of slavery. Muhammad himself, the prophet of freedom, equality and honoring of women said so, as well as Umar Ibn al-Khattab.

We also discussed polygamy and how a man is allowed to marry as many as four women at the same time, in addition to what he owns of maid-slaves.

° We have examined also the issue of easy divorce and replacement of wives as it is manifested clearly in the Qur'anic verses and exemplified by the behavior of Muhammad, the Caliphs and the companions. This divorce drives away the woman and her children and propagates corruption in society. Islam does not enforce any restriction or limitation against it (as Christianity does) to protect women, children and society. If a man divorced his wife by uttering three times, "You are divorced," then he wished to restore her and she agrees to do so, Muhammad insists that she should get married to somebody else first and actually have [...] [intimate] [...] [relationship]; then she could go back to her first husband and her children as Rafa'a's wife did when she wanted to return to her ex-husband. Muhammad told her that she had to have an actual marriage [...] with her new husband, Abdul Rahman, before she could return to her first husband. Muhammad relied on a clear text "revealed" to him through Gabriel the angel for this judgment. He said it was revealed that the divorced wife is not lawful for the first husband until she marries another man (Chapter 2:230).

° Women in general (as Muhammad declared) are the majority of the people in hell on the day of judgment.

- ° They are the cause of evil omens.
- ° They lack intelligence and faith.
- ° In regard to inheritance, they are entitled only to one-half of the man's rightful inheritance.
- ° Her testimony in courts and business contracts is equal to one-half of the man's testimony and value.
- ° Muhammad also said that women possess sinister characters.
- ° Lastly, if a woman walks in front of a [muslim] man while he is praying, she will invalidate his prayer and he has to repeat it. Muhammad said that a prayer would be nullified if a donkey, a dog or a woman pass in front of the praying [muslim] man.

The greatest among the companions, such as Ibn Abbas, Abu Zarr, Abu Hurayra, as well as the Caliphs (like Ali Ibn Abi Talib) have confirmed these statements. All Muslims know who these famous personalities are and what position they occupy in transmitting the Hadiths. Such abuses made A'isha scream in their faces, "You have put us on the same level with a donkey and a dog!"

